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picture the actors in the plays of Aristophanes not unlike our little figures. Statuettes of actors of later date, illustrative of the New Comedy, have also been found, and are distinguishable from the earlier ones chiefly by the large funnel-shaped mouths of their masks. Whether such figures were used by children to personify actors, like the burattini in Italy, or whether they were votive offerings placed, perhaps, in an actor's grave as an appropriate memorial, we have at present no means of determining.

The seven remaining terracottas include one actor similar to those just described but not from the same tomb, two figures of Tanagra type, three from Tarentum, and one fragmentary relief probably from Sicily. The Tanagra statuettes consist of a seated woman, enveloped in her drapery, and a crouching girl, evidently playing the game of knucklebones (*ἀσπράγαλοι*), a favorite pastime of Greek girls. Both are charming creations, of exceptionally good execution, and belong to the fourth century B. C.

The three Tarentine figures are also unusually fine examples of that fabric. Two represent nude girls, probably Aphrodite, in graceful poses; the third is draped and is standing in an easy attitude with her weight on one foot and the other drawn back; considerable traces of color are preserved on the drapery. They date from the third century B. C.

The fragmentary relief represents a man reclining, leaning on his left arm. A hand resting on his right shoulder must be from another figure, so that this is evidently part of a group, either a banquet scene or a funerary subject. The style is archaic, of the sixth century B. C.

G. M. A. R.

#### POTS WITH HIERATIC INSCRIPTIONS

**A**MONG the various exhibits in The Metropolitan Museum of Art the collection illustrating Egyptian art is unique in the proportion of inscribed objects which it includes. The statement may be ven-

tured that fully one fifth of the Museum's Egyptian antiquities present longer or shorter inscriptions and the proportion would be still greater but for the prehistoric objects which antedate the common use of writing, and the amulets and beads which are too tiny to be inscribed. Some of these inscriptions are legends identifying the individual or object represented, others give the words supposed to be uttered by the persons depicted in a scene; one small stone is inscribed with medical prescriptions; a few longer inscriptions are autobiographical and still others contain fragments of poetry. But by far the largest number belong to a special class of religious texts concerned with the welfare of the dead and we shall presently consider more closely the commonest of the shorter texts of this class.

These inscriptions on Museum objects vary greatly in value. Often they are inscribed carelessly and are therefore full of mistakes which make their decipherment difficult. Not infrequently they are rather barren in content, although even the duller lend an additional interest to the monuments bearing them. When an inscription consists only of well-known formulae, one may expect at least to learn from it the name and titles of the person for whose benefit it was written, and frequently, when archaeological evidence fails, to gain help in dating the monument on which it occurs. The inscription may fix the date of the monument in a variety of ways, as by naming the year of the reigning king, by palaeographical evidence, the drawing of its signs determining the period, and by the occurrence in it of proper names or other words or phrases of which the chronology has previously been determined.

Our Museum inscriptions render the visitor familiar with the appearance of only one kind of Egyptian writing, the hieroglyphic, in which each character is a more or less carefully drawn picture. Hieroglyphic writing goes back in its origins far beyond 3400 B. C., the approximate date of the beginning of the historic era in Egypt. In its early stages it consisted of pictographs which sufficed for the few needs for written expression of an un-

civilized people. But about the dawn of history, so it is believed, the pictographs began rapidly to acquire phonetic values, and when Egyptian writing was fully developed, it was highly complex and only a minority of its signs were purely pictorial. To the eye, however, all signs appear as pictures and only the initiated can tell that one carefully drawn bird, for example, is the letter *m* while another serves to indicate

ary in an early period to write in vertical columns, and later in horizontal lines, an elaborately decorated Egyptian monument, whatever its age, usually exhibits both vertical and horizontal inscribed lines. Conservatism also had a large share in keeping the hieroglyphic writing alive, for, as the oldest form of writing, the hieroglyphs were in a measure sacred and by no means to be set aside. It is indicative of



FIG. 1 POTS WITH INSCRIPTIONS IN OLD HIERATIC

that the particular word which it terminates is the name of a kind of bird. Two factors contributed largely to retain these pictures as writing throughout Egyptian history. One was their decorative value. Like the Arabs of a later age, the Egyptians adorned their buildings with bold, large inscriptions which held an important place in the decorative scheme. The Egyptian sense of balance in composing the decoration of a wall or smaller monument even led to taking certain liberties with the writing; for while normally the hieroglyphs were written from right to left, when symmetry demanded it there was no hesitation in placing them so that they read from left to right, and while it was custom-

this feeling that until a comparatively late age, religious texts were inscribed preferably in hieroglyphic writing.

But the natural tendency in all writing to develop an easily executed form for everyday purposes was not evaded by the practical Egyptians. As soon as phonetic writing was fairly under way, in fact, hand in hand with its development, we may suppose that somewhat simplified, more quickly written forms of the signs came into use. At first these were readily recognizable abbreviations of the various hieroglyphs, but gradually the two kinds of writing diverged widely, and only a scholar familiar with the history of Egyptian cursive writing can divine in the various

curves and quirks of late cursive signs the parts of the hieroglyphs in which they had their origin. In all lands the nature of the material available for writing has its influence on the script itself. Thus angularity is a marked characteristic of the ancient writing of the plain of the Tigris and Euphrates, for there the most convenient material was the clay tablet in which the signs were incised. On the other hand, in Egypt the plentiful papyrus furnished a writing material upon which a brush filled with fluid color could glide smoothly and rapidly. The value of papyrus as writing material must have been realized at an early date, for by the Fifth Dynasty (about 2700 B. C.) it was in use for temple accounts and it is chiefly to this admirable early paper that the pleasing character of the everyday writing of the Egyptians is due, while the land furnished, too, various rushes, the ends of which when frayed were adapted to the execution of broad and finely curved lines.

These two kinds of writing, the formal, monumental hieroglyphic and the cursive of common usage, existed side by side through more than three thousand years. The one, like modern printing,<sup>1</sup> was read by the educated but produced only by a small class of workmen whose special business was to inscribe it; the other, like modern handwriting, was written as well as read by the ordinary scribe. If a man had a letter to send to some one in the next village, the letter was not written in hieroglyphic but in the cursive hand. Accounts and business data of all kinds were recorded in the cursive and the most important literary texts preserved to us are in this form of writing rather than in hieroglyphic. Like modern handwritings, too, the various ancient Egyptian texts in cursive writing possess an individuality, and are comparatively easy or difficult to read according to the degree of clearness with which the respective scribes wrote. The cursive signs, originally derived from hieroglyphs, were modified in turn, as time went on, and even brought confusion into the hieroglyphs. This came about partly through the resemblance that two signs,

<sup>1</sup>Ermann. *Die Hieroglyphen*, p. 36.

totally unlike in the hieroglyphs, or pictures, might bear to each other when, in the cursive, details were omitted, corners rounded, and the thicker brush line used. The copy put into the hands of stonecutters and decorators was naturally in ordinary, cursive writing, and it was easy for a careless or ignorant workman to misread his copy and substitute one sign for another, or, having forgotten the exact appearance of a given hieroglyph, to start a variant form closely resembling the cursive. Such mistakes, oft repeated, tended to create new hieroglyphic values and forms.

Modern scholars call the Egyptian cursive writing in most of its stages "hieratic." In the course of the last thousand years before Christ, however, hieratic was superseded in profane usage by an offshoot, a special and highly abbreviated cursive known as "demotic,"<sup>2</sup> but it did not die out until well into the Roman period, a new use being found for it in the recording of religious texts. This last fact elucidates the name "hieratic," which means "devoted to sacred purposes," and is derived from an early Christian writer, Clement of Alexandria, in whose day the name was warranted, although it is unfortunate that a term so inappropriate to the great mass of texts connoted by it, should have become fixed in modern terminology.

These introductory statements will perhaps interest the reader in the set of six little pots<sup>3</sup> illustrated in Fig. 1, which bear inscriptions in hieratic writing. The pots were acquired in 1912, but have not been exhibited until now, when they are temporarily shown in the Third Egyptian Room. Their inscriptions are among the few specimens of the Egyptian cursive writing to be seen in our galleries and have the special value of belonging to an early period from which comparatively little of such writing is extant.

Nothing is known of the provenience of these pots, as they were bought in the open market. All are wheel-turned and have a wash of light red over the upper part and a simple ornament of wavy lines, narrow

<sup>2</sup>From *δημοτικὸς* "of the people."

<sup>3</sup>Accession Nos. 12.182.43A-F.

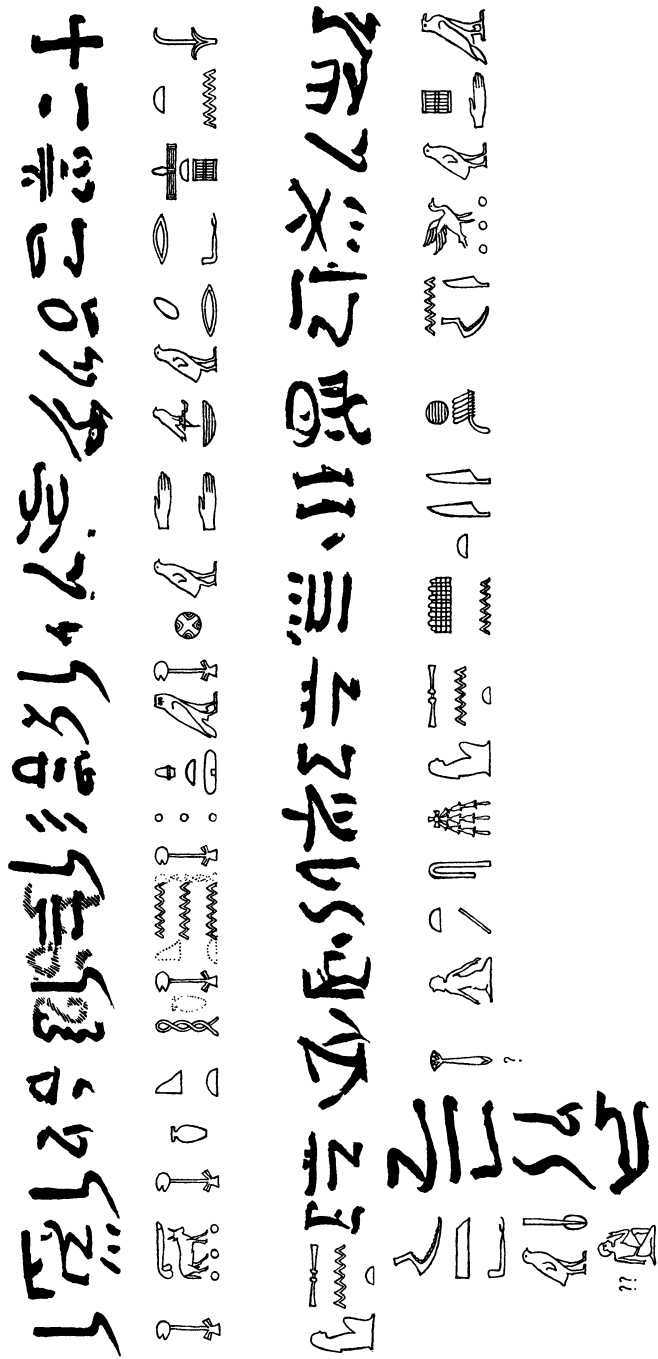


FIG. 2 FACSIMILE OF AN OLD HIERATIC INSCRIPTION WITH TRANSLITERATION INTO HIEROGLYPHIC

bands, or broad bands crossed by diagonally placed indentations, all the ornament having been impressed in the clay before baking. No attempt was made to finish carefully the lower part of the pots and the surfaces are more or less cracked where cut from the lump of clay from which they were built up. Each of the four covered vessels has four holes near the rim and one in the center of the cover, which served no doubt for the passage of cords, secured on top of the covers and held by lumps of Nile mud stamped with a seal, thus sealing the contents of the vessels.

The largest pot with cover is  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches (m. 0.146) high and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches (m. 0.14) in its greatest diameter. Three of the covers are of sun-dried mud which was given a smooth coating of brown "slip" (clay in solution) while the fourth cover and the pots are of kiln-baked clay. The little vessels deserve respect as good products of an important craft, but their special claim to our attention lies in their inscriptions and to these we may now turn.

The inscriptions, except for minor variations, are the same on all the vessels, a fact which confirms what was suggested by their unity of style, namely, that they belonged together originally, having been made as a set. The inscription on the largest pot is shown in facsimile and rolled out in Fig. 2, with the hieroglyphic equivalents of its signs placed below it.<sup>1</sup> On the pot itself (see Fig. 1) the beginning of the inscription is separated from the close by a vertical line; to the left of this line the writing begins and passes around the

vessel to the left; then, after the vessel was encircled, the scribe chose to write the bit that remained in a vertical column. On the three other covered vessels the inscription winds around in a horizontal direction, overlapping once or twice; in the two narrow-necked vessels without covers, it is abridged and written in vertical columns and on the covers it radiates from the string-holes in vertical writing. The pots date from a period when in cursive writing horizontal lines were just beginning to be used, side by side with the older vertical columns, and thus represent the unsettled transitional feeling in this matter.

In order to appreciate the character of these particular specimens of hieratic writing, as well as to place the pots chronologically, a brief consideration of the various phases through which hieratic writing passed is desirable. The chief authority on this subject, Dr. Georg Möller of the Berlin Museum,<sup>2</sup> has introduced the terms Archaic, Old, Middle, New, and Late hieratic to distinguish these phases. The oldest specimens, which he calls "Archaic hieratic," are very few in number and range in date from the beginning of the historic era to the end of the Third Dynasty (ca. 3400-2900 B. C.). The majority of the signs included in these early documents might be called equally well "Cursive hieroglyphs," so closely do they adhere to their hieroglyphic originals. In fact, they are no more abbreviated than the signs in later religious texts, the writing of which is actually called by scholars Cursive hieroglyphic.<sup>3</sup> One character only in the repertory of extant Archaic hieratic signs as published seems a true cursive, namely, the human face seen in profile. Dr. Möller points out that even the feet of the human and animal figures are still indicated, as well as the bills of birds. It is the position of these Archaic

<sup>1</sup>An incised line runs around the vessel breaking the brush strokes. This has been disregarded in the facsimile, as to have considered this accidental modification would have given a false idea of the signs. The hieratic writing is reproduced as closely as a modern pen can render the facile brush strokes, but there is inevitably a little loss in surety of line. The reader can correct his impression by reference to the photographic view (Fig. 1). There is no intention to give the appearance of a line of hieroglyphic writing, but rather the spacing and grouping of the hieratic has been retained in order to facilitate the recognition of equivalents in comparing the two kinds of signs. The hieroglyphs are copied from G. Möller, *Paläographie*, vol. 1, and are roughly contemporary with the hieratic signs.

<sup>2</sup>G. Möller. *Hieratische Paläographie. Die ägyptische Buchschrift in ihrer Entwicklung von der fünften Dynastie bis zur römischen Kaiserzeit*. Berlin, 1909 ff. Three of the projected five volumes have been published.

<sup>3</sup>The visitor to the Museum may see examples of "Cursive hieroglyphic" of the Twelfth Dynasty (about 2000 B. C.) in the longer texts of Ukh-hotep's coffin. Accession No. 12.182.132.

hieratic texts as representing the beginnings out of which a highly developed cursive grew that justifies the name applied to them. The next stage is Old hieratic for which the texts are more numerous, although still few in number as compared with the abundance of documents from later periods. The earliest texts known as Old hieratic are of the Old Kingdom (about 2700 B. C.) and the latest of the early Middle Kingdom, shortly before 2000 B. C. Now, the ligature, or union of two or more

end of this period, probably to the Eleventh Dynasty (2160–2000 B. C.). The reader comparing Figs. 2 and 3 can sense the main differences, as defined above, between the Old hieratic and later writing, namely, the less liberal use of ligatures in the older style and its closer adherence to the original models, the hieroglyphs. In Fig. 2, in the upper line, as the inscription is distributed on the page, there are no ligatures at all, and the line below contains only two. One of these, the union of the

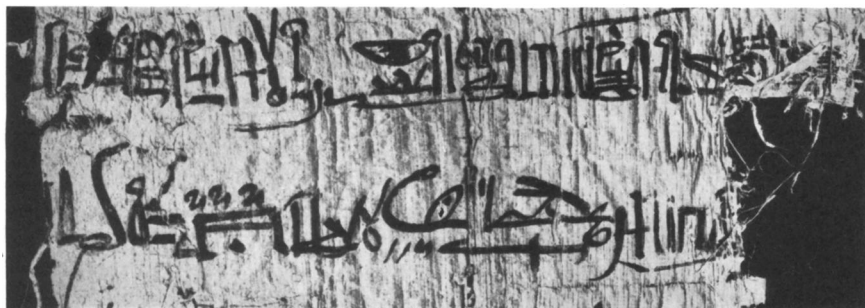


FIG. 3 SPECIMEN OF NEW HIERATIC WRITING

signs, is fully developed, although used as yet only sparingly, and many of the signs have departed far from their hieroglyphic originals. Middle hieratic corresponds roughly in time to the Middle Kingdom, Hyksos Period, and opening years of the Empire (2000–1500 B. C.), and New hieratic to the Empire (1500–950 B. C.). Each of these successive styles presents marked changes in the forms of the individual signs and an increase in the use of ligatures. New hieratic in its later stages is a highly ornate style of writing having numerous flourishes and dots not essential to the signs (Fig. 3). Finally, Late hieratic exhibits, not a new stage in the development of the writing, but the crystallization of New hieratic in religious texts, at a time when the popular hand had taken the new turn called Demotic.

The inscriptions on the newly acquired pots fall under Old hieratic, and a comparison of the individual signs with published specimens leads one to assign them to the

letters n and t, may be seen twice—in the middle of the line and at the left-hand extremity, the horizontal zigzag sign (in the hieroglyphic) being the letter n. Within the period of Old hieratic, the inscriptions under discussion are marked as belonging to the end rather than the beginning of the period by the somewhat ruder, heavier character of the writing. Egyptian writing, reflecting the general artistic tendencies of the respective dynasties, was more delicate and had even a certain elegance during the Fifth Dynasty (2700 B. C.) when relief sculpture was highly refined and sophisticated. In the Eleventh Dynasty, a time of political and artistic revival after the troublous period intervening between the Old and Middle Kingdoms, sculpture and writing alike suggest strength rather than grace.

In the upper line of Fig. 2 it is interesting to observe where the scribe made a mistake and then corrected it. He had made an omission, with the result that one word may now be traced, sign by sign, twice, first

partially erased and with the correction above it, and then repeated in its proper place. Two signs are without parallels among published documents and their transliteration, especially that of the sign marked in the hieroglyphic by a double question mark, is open to doubt. In the case of the more doubtful sign, one might suspect an abnormal form, due to a slip, did it not occur clearly preserved four times on the various pots.

Turning now to the meaning of the inscriptions, a translation may first be given: "An offering which the king gives. Osiris, Lord of Busiris, [may he grant] thousands in funerary offerings, thousands of water and beer, thousands of cattle, thousands of wild fowl for the honorable Senet-menet, born of Senet-uzet, deceased." We have here the prayer for offerings very common on Egyptian funerary objects, a prayer which could be addressed to various deities but which most frequently was addressed as here to Osiris. The early seat of the worship of the god was the Delta city called by the Greeks Busiris. The opening phrase "An offering which the king gives" is a survival from the time when the funerary offerings were literally dependent on the king's bounty. The expression came to be used as a substantive denoting any kind of funerary offering; here it serves as a kind of introduction or heading to the offering formula. The formula occurs also in fuller form asking for a greater variety of offerings, incense, milk, wine, clothing, agreeable breezes being among the benefits frequently requested. On one of the other pots of this set the list ends with the blanket request for "all good things," an item which, after all, was intended to cover only material needs, for it often occurs expanded—"for all good and pure things on which a god lives." The "thousands" is, of course, a pleasant exaggeration, exacting merely that the food and other comforts upon which the Egyptian thought his future existence depended should be furnished in abundance. Provision was made for actual food and drink to be placed in the cult chamber of the tomb, and similar offerings were deposited with the dead at the time

of burial, it being the part of filial piety to provide such offerings, and the well-to-do even ensuring legally, before death, such provisions in perpetuity by means of foundations for the support of a mortuary priesthood to carry on their funerary cults. But it is obvious that the Egyptians had faith, when actual offerings failed, in the efficacy of the prayer for offerings inscribed on gravestones and objects deposited in the tomb. The grave stela, which was in a place accessible after the burial, occasionally contained a petition to the passer-by to utter the offering-prayer, even as he hoped in death to secure for himself similar benefits. Such an act could only, of course, be conceived as having a magical value.

The two proper names, Senet-menet and Senet-uzet, are feminine, being the names of a mother and daughter, and the pots were doubtless a part of the latter's funerary equipment. If they were ever actually filled, it is probable that they contained foodstuffs such as grain, inasmuch as they are too large and crude for toilet vases. There are similar pots in Berlin,<sup>1</sup> found in a family tomb of about 2500 B. C., which bear legends in Old hieratic giving their contents, a kind of grain.

Some interest attaches to the names Senet-uzet and Senet-menet, as they have not been previously noted. Their formation, however, is a well-known one, that is, they are compounded with the name of a divinity and a word which may perhaps be translated "like." Senet-uzet is a compound with the name of the patron goddess of Lower Egypt. Menet,<sup>2</sup> however, is unknown but must be some obscure local divinity, possibly one who was worshipped under the form of the swallow, inasmuch as there is an Egyptian word *menet* meaning "swallow."

Another point of interest to the student is the fact that the words of the offering formula are less abbreviated than is usual. It was customary to employ only word-

<sup>1</sup>Ausführliches Verzeichnis der ägyptischen Altertümer und Gipsabgüsse, 2nd edition, p. 435.

<sup>2</sup>In the inscription reproduced in Fig. 2 the *t* is omitted in the writing of this word, but it is present in eight other occurrences of the word on the covers and the other pots.



signs for "cattle," "wild-fowl," and the other offerings mentioned. Where cattle is written only with a picture of a bull, one is uncertain which of several words for cattle an Egyptian would have understood here, but our inscriptions give the phonetic values of a number of these words.

Finally, attention may be called to the two kinds of ink, black and red, with which these inscriptions were written, three covers

being inscribed in red, and the remaining cover and the pots themselves in black ink. In secular use, as here, the purpose of the red ink is not clearly defined, but in long religious texts such as those on the coffin of Ukh-hotep, it was employed to mark the titles and glosses, a usage which passed over into Europe and was the origin of all later rubrics.

C. L. R.

## ACCESSIONS AND NOTES

### THREE LECTURES BY KENYON COX

THE Trustees take pleasure in announcing a series of three lectures by Kenyon Cox, to be delivered in the lecture hall closely following the opening of the Benjamin Altman Collection. These lectures will be allied in their thought to the paintings of the collection, and will give a sympathetic basis for their appreciation. The general title of Mr. Cox's lectures is *The Golden Age of Painting*. The dates upon which they will be delivered are as follows:

1. *The Culmination of the Renaissance*, November 24.
2. *The Venetians*, December 1.
3. *Flemish and Dutch Painting of the Seventeenth Century*. December 8.

The lectures, which will be free, will begin at 4.15 P. M. Each lecture will be followed by stereopticon illustrations.

A LECTURE BY LAURENCE BINYON.—Under the auspices of the Japan Society, Mr. Laurence Binyon of the British Museum will deliver a lecture in our Lecture Hall on Monday evening, November 30th, at 8.15, upon *Japanese Prints—an Art of the People*. The lecture will be illustrated with lantern slides, and will be open to the public without tickets.

PORTRAIT OF BENJAMIN ALTMAN.—At the opening of the Benjamin Altman Collection on November 17th there will be shown a portrait of Mr. Altman, recently presented to the Museum by the executors

of his estate, who believed it "worthy of a place among the works of art which he collected and cherished with so much care and affection." This portrait will, to quote Mr. de Forest's letter of acceptance, "appropriately link his personality and his memory to the works of art which gave him so much pleasure, and which through his generosity will be enjoyed by the great multitude who visit the Museum."

EXAMPLES OF MODERN SCULPTURE.—The Museum has recently acquired two important examples of modern sculpture: a group of a Stag Dragged Down by Two Scotch Hounds by Barye, and a Piping Pan by Louis St. Gaudens.

The Barye piece is one of probably but two proof copies of the group. It was afterwards considerably changed and exhibited at the Salon of 1833. The Museum example has the rich brown patina characteristic of the proofs of Barye's work, the casting of which was personally supervised by the sculptor. It is the later variation of the group which was put on the market, so that the Museum copy is practically unique.

In both versions one of the dogs is jumping over the deer's back and is seizing one of the deer's ears in his mouth. In the Museum version the second dog, in his eagerness, has fallen on his back and been dragged along by the wounded stag, whose throat he holds in a firm grip. In the more usual arrangement the stag has fallen upon the second dog, the legs and under part of whose body protrude from